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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 /081 W
----------044612 171147Z /15
R 170834Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9219
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE POUCH
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 2150
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMCONSUL BUKUVA POUCH
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 3774

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, MORG, MILI, CG
SUBJECT: MOBUTU PURGES SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

REF: A) IR6821 0053 78; B) KINSHASA 2054; C) BUKAVU A-9
D) LUBUMBASHI A-5; E) KINSHASA 2299

1. SUMMARY RELIABLE INFORMATION REACHING THE EMBASSY INDICATES THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAS UNDERTAKEN A LARGE-SCALE PURGE OF THE ZAIRIAN SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT. SOME 700 OFFICERS AND WARRANT OFFICERS ARE BEING DISMISSED FROM THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES (FAZ) ALONG WITH AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (CND) PERSONNEL. SINCE ALMOST ALL THE INDIVIDUALS BEING DEMOBILIZED BECAUSE THEIR LOYALTY HAS BEEN QUESTIONED ARE FROM SHABA, THE TWO KASAIS AND SOUTHERN BANDUNDU, THE PURGE IS GENERALLY VIEWED BY ZAIRIANS AS BEING
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TRIBALLY-MOTIVATED. WESTERN MILITARY OBSERVERS CONSIDER THE DISMISSED MILITARY OFFICERS, WHO FORM SOME 12 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE OFFICER CORPS, AS BEING AMONG FAZ'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST. WHILE THE LONG-RANGE EFFECT OF THE DISMISSALS ON FAZ MILITARY CAPABILITY IS EXPECTED TO BE DELETERIOUS, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THOSE FIRED ARE STAFF OFFICERS RATHER THAN TROOP COMMANDERS AND SO THE SHORT-RUN EFFECT ON COMBAT READINESS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE

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GREAT. END SUMMARY.

2. A LARGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE ZAIRIAN SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT RECEIVED THEIR DISMISSAL NOTICES ON MARCH 31 (REF A). OTHERS HAVE RECEIVED THEM SINCE THAT DATE AND THE PROCESS IS CONTINUING. THE EMBASSY HAS PHOTO COPIES OF THE NOTICES SENT TO CERTAIN OFFICERS IN THE ARMY AND THE PARAMILITARY GENDARMERIE. THEY CONTAIN NO EXPLANATION OF WHY THE INDIVIDUAL IS BEING DISMISSED, MERELY ORDERING HIM TO CEASE ALL OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES AND TO TURN IN GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IMMEDIATELY. IN SOME CASES PAY AND ALLOWANCES CEASE UPON RECEIPT OF THE NOTICE; IN OTHERS, THE INDIVIDUAL REMAINS ON THE PAYROLL UNTIL AS LATE AS AUGUST 15. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE LATTER ARE UNDER THE LEAST SUSPICION AND THAT THEY WILL BE HELPED TO GET OTHER GOVERNMENT JOBS--BUT IN NONSENSITIVE AREAS.

3. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THOSE BEING DISMISSED ORIGINATE FROM SHABA OR THE TWO KASAIS, OR THEY ARE LUNDA TRIBESMEN FROM SOUTHERN BANDUNDU. THESE ARE PRECISELY THE AREAS WHERE DIS-AFFECTION WITH THE MOBUTU REGIME IS MOST THOROUGHLY INGRAINED. WHILE PRESIDEN MOBUTU MAY HAVE GOOD REASON TO DISTRUST THE LOYALTY OF MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, THE LARGE-SCALE NATURE OF THE PURGES (ABOUT 12 PERCENT OF TOTAL FAZ OFFICER STRENGTH) PRESUMABLY MEANS THAT MANY LOYAL SOLDIERS HAVE ALSO BEEN SUMMARILY DEMOBILIZED. WITH NO WORD OF THE DISMISSALS HAVING APPEARED IN THE LOCAL NEWS MEDIA, RUMORS ARE
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CIRCULATING THAT ALL ZAIRIANS FROM SHABA, THE KASAIS AND SOUTHERN BANDUNDU MAY BE PURGED FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE--CIVIL AS WELL AS MILITARY. THE FACT THAT THE HUGE STATE-OWNED COPPER PRODUCER GECAMINES AND THE RAILROADS HAVE BEEN ORDERED NOT TO HIRE INDIVIDUALS FROM SHABA OR THE KASAIS (REF D) HAS ADDED TO THEIR SENSE OF UNEASINESS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE ANY GOVERNMENT-WIDE TRIBAL PURGE IS UNLIKELY.

4. VERY FEW, IF ANY, FIELD COMMANDERS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DISMISSED FROM FAZ. THE ONLY GENERAL OFFICER TO HAVE BEEN DE-MOBILIZED IS BRIGADIER GENERAL BOPEYA, WHOSE REPUTATION SUFFERED DURING THE RECENT COUP PLOT TRIAL (REF B). MOST OF THOSE FIRED ARE COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS SERVING IN THE KINSHASA AREA. THE DATT REPORTS THAT HE AND HIS WESTERN MILITARY COLLEAGUES CONSIDER THEM TO BE SOME OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAZ; MANY HAVE ATTENDED WESTERN MILITARY SCHOOLS (REF A). THE DEMOBILIZATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE PART OF ANY PLANNED, GENERAL REDUCTION IN FAZ STRENGTH. QUITE THE CONTRARY, REPORTS FROM OUR CONSULATE IN BUKAVU (REF C) AS WELL AS OUR OBSERVATIONS HERE IN KINSHASA INDICATE THAT THE GOZ HAS REIMPOSED CONSCRIPTION IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE MANPOWER FOR THE THREE NEW BRIGADES BEING FORMED WITH BELGIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

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5. THE DATT RECENTLY OBTAINED CERTAIN FIGURES ON THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS DISMISSED FROM MILITARY SERVICE IN THE KINSHASA AREA. THEY TOTAL 483, BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS: ARMY--200; GENDARMERIE--179; HEADQUARTERS (DDN)--47; LOGISTIC CORPS--37; AND NAVY--20. UNDOUBTEDLY SOME AIR FORCE OFFICERS HAVE ALSO BEEN FIRED AS WELL AS SOME FAZ OFFICERS STATIONED OUTSIDE THE KINSHASA AREA. WE ESTIMATE THE TOTAL NUMBER DISMISSED TO BE APPROXIMATELY 700.

6. COMMENT: MOBUTU PERIODICALLY PURGES THE SECURITY SERVICES OF ELEMENTS HE SUSPECTS TO BE DISLOYAL. THE CURRENT PURGE DOES, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO BE MORE INTENSIVE THAN ANY OF RECENT MEMORY. IT COMES LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER THE SHABA WAR DISMISSALS AND HARD ON THE HEELS OF THE EXECUTIONS AND IMPRISONMENT OF 54
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OFFICERS AND NCOS (MOST OF WHOM WERE ALSO FROM SHABA AND THE KASAIS) IN THE COUP PLOT TRIAL (REF E). FAZ MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS IS BOUND TO SUFFER AS A RESULT, ALTHOUGH TO WHAT EXTENT IS NOT YET CLEAR.

7. MORE SIGNIFICANT IN THE LONG RUN IS THIS FRESH EVIDENCE THAT MOBUTU IS RELYING EVER MORE COMPLETELY ON SUPPORT FROM RIVERINE TRIBESMEN FROM HIS OWN HOME AREA. ZAIRE HAS A HISTORY OF SERIOUS FISSIPARIOS TENDENCIES. MOBUTU'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT IS THAT HE HAS HELD THE COUNTRY TOGETHER IN SPITE OF THESE TENDENCIES. HE HAS DONE SO BY RALLYING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE ARMED FORCES, APPEALING TO A SENSE OF NATIONAL PURPOSE AMONG THE EMERGING ELITE, AND CREATING A SINGLE PARTY TO CONTAIN ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY. YET THESE PRESENT PURGES ARE POPULARLY PERCEIVED AS BEING TRIBALLY-MOTIVATED AND DIRECTED AGAINST ALMOST HALF THE NATION. SUCH A PERCEPTION RISKS ERODINGMOBUTU'S CLAIM TO BE THE LEADER OF ALL THE ZAIRIAN PEOPLE AND CAUSING FURTHER DISAFFECTION IN THE AFFECTED REGIONS.
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